

# Partnerships for youth

## Outdoor Summits for Youth



The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) hosted two summits in September 2012. The goal of the summits was to encourage and strengthen partnerships on public lands that educate, engage, and employ underserved youth. Underserved populations include racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, low-income youth, veterans, or girls and young women. The summits brought together federal, state, and local partners who support youth in California.

Organizations discussed current resources available for young people and how outdoor youth providers can better support underserved communities. Speakers, break-out sessions, and working groups explored collaborative ways to educate, engage, and employ youth in America's great outdoors and the field of natural resources. Organizations in attendance had the opportunity to highlight their programs, network with potential

partners, and become more familiar with the BLM and its youth offerings. The summits were well attended, with an average of 40 different organizations represented at each summit.

The summits were facilitated by Dr. Emily Sheffield, California State University, Chico; Recreation, tourism, and hospitality professor. BLM State Director, Jim Kenna provided opening remarks, and the keynote speaker was Juan Martinez; Children and Nature Network leader and National Geographic Emerging Explorer. Martinez was recently featured as an outdoor leader in an [Emmy winning National Geographic video](#).

Youth from public, private, and non-profit organizations served as table hosts during the summits. The purpose of having young people at every table was to facilitate conversations, present ideas to the larger group, and to ensure a youthful perspective was heard when discussing ways to educate, engage, and employ younger generations. The table hosts were employees or interns from the following organizations: American Conservation Experience, Bureau of Land Management, California Conservation Corps, Los Angeles Conservation Corps, Mohave Desert Land Trust, Conservation Corps North Bay, and Student Conservation Association.

## Story Behind the Youth Summits

This year, 16% of BLM California's workforce is eligible for retirement. By the end of 2017, that percentage will increase to 33%. It is projected that in the year 2020, the Hispanic community will comprise 41% of the population in California, with Asians and African Americans comprising 13% and 5%, respectively. A comparison of BLM California's permanent workforce with the Civilian Labor Force shows an underrepresentation for women and minorities in natural resources related career fields. Over the next several years, BLM is strengthening its efforts to ensure there is diversity of its workforce to better reflect the diversity of the Nation it serves.

Looking ahead, BLM California moves to strengthen and expand partnerships to EDUCATE youth about the importance of natural resources, ENGAGE youth in experiences that will provide job skills and appreciation of natural resources, and EMPLOY youth in natural resource careers. The BLM aims to create more opportunities for young people on public lands through partnerships and public engagement. Supporting underserved youth in outdoor experiences encourages environmental literacy and increases qualified applicants in the field of natural resources.

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## Youth Summit Prezi

Ideas from participants were gathered on an interactive wall chart. The BLM youth summit planning team reviewed the notes and wall chart information and created a [Youth Summit Prezi](#) presentation based on the wall chart process that provides a recap of the Summit proceedings and outcomes.

## Let Us Communicate *Your Organization's* Accomplishments

The BLM sends out an informative e-newsletter [News.bytes](#) four times a month that highlights current events and projects on BLM's public lands. We would like to highlight your partnerships or organizational actions to support underserved youth that have been developed since the Youth Summits. Please email your organization's name, a brief description of the project or partnership you've developed since the summit, and details about the youth you are working with to [skaner@blm.gov](mailto:skaner@blm.gov). We look forward to sharing your success with our e-newsletter subscribers!

## Connect with BLM Online

BLM California has a [youth webpage](#) that displays youth programs, partner activities, and provides contact information for BLM's youth coordinators. Also, the [Public Lands tumblr](#) is an official tumblr for the Bureau of Land Management. Follow the next generation of BLMers as they share their experiences on the public lands. Furthermore, students working for the BLM have put together an engaging and informative [video](#) about opportunities that exist for young professionals. Check out their video on [Youtube!](#)



## Participating Organizations at the Youth Summits

American Camp Association (ASA)  
 American Conservation Experience (ACE)  
 Americorps NCCC  
 Audubon Center and Sanctuary  
 Bay Area Wilderness Training  
 Big City Mountaineers  
 Blacks in Government  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 California State Parks  
 California Conservation Corps (CCC)  
 California Department of Education,  
 California Regional Environmental Education  
 Community (CREEC)  
 Central California Consortium  
 City of Riverside; Parks, Recreation,  
 and Community Services  
 College of the Desert,  
 Applied Science Division  
 Community Action Partnership,  
 San Bernardino (CAPs)  
 Conservation Corps North Bay  
 Cosumnes River College  
 Cosumnes River Preserve  
 Creative Before and After School Programs  
 for Success  
 Crissy Field Center  
 CSU Chico  
 CSU Sacramento, College Assistance Migrant  
 Program (CAMP)  
 The Farmworker Institute of Education and  
 Leadership Development (FIELD)  
 Fish and Wildlife Service  
 Foundation for Youth Investment  
 Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve  
 Friends of the Desert Mountains  
 Girl Scouts of San Geronio Council

Great Basin Institute  
 Green Tech  
 James O. Jessie Desert Highland Unity Center  
 Lassen Land and Trail Trust  
 Leave no Trace  
 The Living Desert  
 Lockeford Plant Materials Center  
 Los Angeles Conservation Corps  
 National Park Service, Pacific West Region  
 Youth Program  
 National Parks and Conservation Association  
 Naturebridge  
 The O.A.R.S. Foundation  
 Our Youth Alive!  
 Outdoor Afro  
 Outdoor Educators Institute  
 Pacific Crest Trail Association  
 Riverside Metropolitan Museum  
 Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation  
 District  
 Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains  
 National Monument  
 Sierra Club  
 Sierra Club's Inner City Outings,  
 Los Angeles Group  
 Southern California Consortium  
 St. Paul Baptist Church  
 The Student Conservation Association (SCA)  
 Tuleyome  
 UC Riverside  
 The Urban League of Sacramento  
 USDA Forest Service  
 USDA-NRCS Lockeford Plant Materials Center  
 The Wildlands Conservancy





# Online Databases

Youth summit participants expressed the need for an online resource to share youth programs, events, and employment opportunities. Two resources already exist and we encourage you to utilize and contribute to the following two websites:

1. **Outdoor Youth Providers**—an online database created by the Stewardship Council and Foundation for Youth Investment. Network and link successive outdoor engagement opportunities, partners, and programs.
2. **Children & Nature Network**—a groups directory and nationwide events calendar to publicize upcoming nature events for youth.

## Youth Summit Findings: Participant Insights from Youth Panels



An hour long youth panel took place at both summits. The 7–9 person panels were comprised of young people from public, private, and non-profit organizations. Panelists shared their experiences and personal stories about successes and challenges they encountered while working in natural resources. Panelists provided practical insights about the value in educating, engaging, and employing youth in nature. After each session, summit participants were asked to write down at least one idea they took away from the session. The list below shows some of the insights from the youth that resonated with participants:

### Ideas about EDUCATING YOUTH

*Program messages should get to youth early in childhood development and be repeated*

*Youth aren't aware of learning and employment opportunities existing in natural resources*

*Duplicate effective programs in more places including urban and rural communities*

*There's a diverse array of incentives to go, work, live, and protect the outdoors. It's different in each community*

### Ideas about ENGAGING YOUTH

*Outdoor experiences are life changing and can save lives*

*Youth need mentors with similar backgrounds to succeed*

*Be inclusive and avoid stereotypes. There is no single type of person who benefits from time outdoors*

*Youth have to be engaged not just once but multiple times*

*Youth have a sense of gratitude and passion for nature, and believe they can make a difference*

*Youth need information about opportunities—especially in underserved communities. Youth want to and will pursue opportunities that are available to them*

*Organizations need to partner to get more youth engaged in the outdoors*

*Program information should be shared with youth and their families*

*Be creative to reach youth—try multiple avenues*

*Encourage urban interaction with nature*

### Ideas about EMPLOYING YOUTH

*Chronic under-employment keeps young diverse people from careers in the outdoors*

*Youth feel sincere personal fulfillment and satisfaction for their organization and work*

*Youth need access, not just inspiration: Youth want to get involved with natural resources and have environmental careers, but it is hard to find permanent employment and must move from project to project*

*Internships tend to be misleading by not resulting in a permanent job*



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## Moving Forward from the Youth Summit: The Big Ideas

A team of students from California State University, Chico took detailed notes during the summits to capture participant comments, key themes, and new ideas. The comments from participants were gathered on an interactive wall chart. The youth summit planning team utilized the notes and wall chart information to develop an action plan to reach under-served youth. The overarching ideas for expanding opportunities for youth include:

### Building Bridges—Strengthen communication networks for youth and youth-serving organizations

Many Youth Summit participants expressed the need for more effective and clear communication networks to increase overall awareness about current programs, jobs, trainings, and events in the field of natural resources.

BLM will:

- Highlight partner organization's youth programs through [News.bytes](#).
- Partner with [Foundation for Youth Investment](#) and the [Children & Nature Network's events calendar](#) to encourage better communication among youth organizations.
- Co-host a second youth summit with partners.
- Create a youth advisory council with partners and appoint a BLM state youth program leader.
- Develop and implement strategies to better reach diverse youth.

### Growing Capacity—Continue and expand partnerships and resources to serve youth

Participants expressed the importance of connecting with California's growing population of young people to increase the diversity of BLM's workforce.

BLM will:

- Work with agencies and partners to create more opportunities to educate, engage, and employ youth.
- Co-develop mentor programs with youth organizations.
- Recruit diverse young people for internships and employment from partnering organizations such as: California Conservation Corps, Student Conservation Association, American Conservation Experience, Los Angeles Conservation Corps, Conservation Corps North Bay, Great Basin Institute, and other youth organizations.
- Develop new partnerships with academic institutions and non-governmental organizations, such as: Cosumnes River College, Pasadena City College, College of the Desert, Outward Bound Adventures, and the Urban League.

### Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists—*Educate, Engage, and Employ* youth and families

BLM is working to provide opportunities for youth that will develop their skills and experience needed for careers in natural resources management.

BLM will:

- Develop and implement the Public Lands Education Project to reach under-served youth. Project partners are the National Parks Service, U.S. Forest Service, school districts, and non-governmental organizations. For a detailed description of this program, please visit the [BLM youth webpage](#).
- Field School: An academic-based field school on public lands for students working towards a certificate or degree in a natural resources related field.

Over the next three years, BLM will focus on 12 action items to grow the agency's capacity, build bridges, and better engage America's diverse youth. The action items are:





## Action Plan: Expanding Opportunities for Youth

In the next three years, BLM will:

	Action Item	Build Bridges – Strengthen Communication Networks for Youth and Youth Serving Organizations	Grow Capacity – Continue and Expand Partnerships to Serve Youth	Develop Next Generation of Conservationists – ED = Educate EN = Engage EM = Employ
1.	Develop Public Lands Education Project - Transformational youth program with emphasis on culture, eco-literacy, interpretation, exposure to outdoor careers, team building, leadership, and physical challenge	X	X	ED, EN, EM
2.	Design Field School with academic institutions - An academic-based field school for students working towards a certificate or degree in a natural resources related field	X	X	ED, EN, EM
3.	Host second Youth Summit with partners in 2013	X	X	EN
4.	BLM State Youth Coordinator creates a Youth Advisory Council with agencies and youth organizations	X	X	EN, ED
5.	Develop and implement strategies with government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and partners to better reach diverse youth from urban and rural communities	X	X	ED, EN, EM
6.	Partner with organizations to create a database of youth programs focused on natural resources	X	X	
7.	Develop a “youth” section in BLM-CA Newsbytes - Highlight BLM and partner organizations’ youth opportunities, events, and activities	X		
8.	Provide direction and outreach about permanent and seasonal employment, as well as the new Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Pathways Program	X		ED
9.	Increase internships with youth organizations	X		EN, EM
10.	Develop and formalize a mentoring program	X		ED, EN, EM
11.	Explore ways to better engage underserved youth in existing BLM programs such as Hands on the Land, Take it Outside, and volunteer programs	X	X	ED, EN
12.	Enhance BLM youth website - Focus on youth programs, educational resources, and upcoming events	X		ED, EN